


[HOME](#)
[EDUCATION](#)
[LABOR](#)
[NEWSROOM](#)
[REPORTS](#)
[ABOUT US](#)

Welcome to the "EdLabor Insider" e-newsletter! In this issue:

- [Cost of College E-Forum Wrap-Up](#)
- [Survey Results: Attracting Excellent Teachers Is Your Number One Concern](#)
- [Outrage of the Week: Republican Funding Bill Shortchanges Education AGAIN!](#)

Cost of College E-Forum Wrap-Up

July 1 marked the end of our College Affordability E-Forum. We want to thank everyone who participated in the e-forum. We heard from hundreds of students, parents, experts and community leaders about the importance of a college education and the hardship involved in paying for it. Take a moment to visit our [e-forum website](#) and browse through the testimony. Examples of typical statements are below. Also be sure to take a look at the Democrats' plan to [cut college loan interest rates in half](#).

"I am 25, and will be graduating with my masters in Social Work from Case Western Reserve University in 2007. My total student loan debt will be over \$100,000. ...I find myself scared and worried about my future upon graduation. Please help people like me." -- Heather Loomis from Cleveland, OH

"I was the first in my family to receive a bachelor's degree. For that honor, I incurred \$20,000 in student loans over the course of five years at a public university, all the while working almost full time for rent and food. I now pay over \$250 a month in interest alone on this consolidated loan at 8.5% interest... a total \$60,000 by the time I am done paying. ...At this point, I don't see myself saving for retirement or owning a home unless some miracle occurs. I cannot afford to have a child." -- M. Ratliff from Austin, TX

"This is the land of opportunity, and increasingly I am seeing my opportunities dwindle. ...Having an affordable education allows me and the millions of other students to be better contributing citizens." -- Amanda Smith from Garfield Heights, OH

Survey Results: Attracting Excellent Teachers Is Your Number One Concern

A month ago many of you completed a short survey telling us which education issues you thought were most

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important. We appreciate your responses (results are below) and pledge to continue our fight to strengthen valuable education programs that benefit Americans from early childhood through adulthood.

31%	Attracting the best teachers to our elementary and secondary schools
29%	The rising cost of college and graduates' struggle with paying off student loans
15%	Investing in math/science training for our children
15%	Other issues, such as: more funding for federal education programs; adult education; vocational education; and the Troops to Teachers program
8%	High-quality, affordable child care

Outrage of the Week: Republican Funding Bill Shortchanges Education AGAIN!

There they go again! House Republicans are planning to slash key education funding by \$400 million next year compared to last year, (and more than \$1 billion compared to 2005). That means dozens of critical education programs such as teacher quality grants, the Safe and Drug Free Schools program, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act will see dramatic cuts in funding. Other programs like Head Start and vocational and adult education grants would have their funding frozen at 2006 levels. Read our [overview report](#) to learn more about what could happen to the U.S. education system if the Republican funding bill becomes law.

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